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ABSTRACT

A summary is provided of the activities and outcomes of Irvine Valley College's (IVC's) CompuEnglish Project, a program designed to introduce word processing skills in Freshman Composition classes and assess improvements in student writing. First, introductory material describes efforts in computer-based composition undertaken at other schools, explains IVC's goals in initiating the project, and reviews research findings concerning the types of improvement in student writing associated with computer usage. Section I offers an overview of project activities to date, including: (1) a brief overview of the first efforts to introduce a word processing component as part of the regular curriculum in two classes; (2) plans for the future of the project; (3) a review of 1985 activities, which included training sessions for instructors interested in the program; (4) research results from an extensive tracking program to evaluate the effectiveness of computer assistance in writing, including findings related to unexpectedly great improvements in student writing, student satisfaction, and instructor input; (5) a discussion of program assessment activities; (6) information on equipment, materials, and software; (7) a review of cost considerations; and (8) concluding comments on new products and developments. Section II contains an updated bibliography. (EJV)

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ED 278455

SPECIAL REPORT 85 - 3

COMPU-ENGLISH PROGRAM

YEAR END REPORT, 1985

JC 870 089

IRVINE VALLEY COLLEGE

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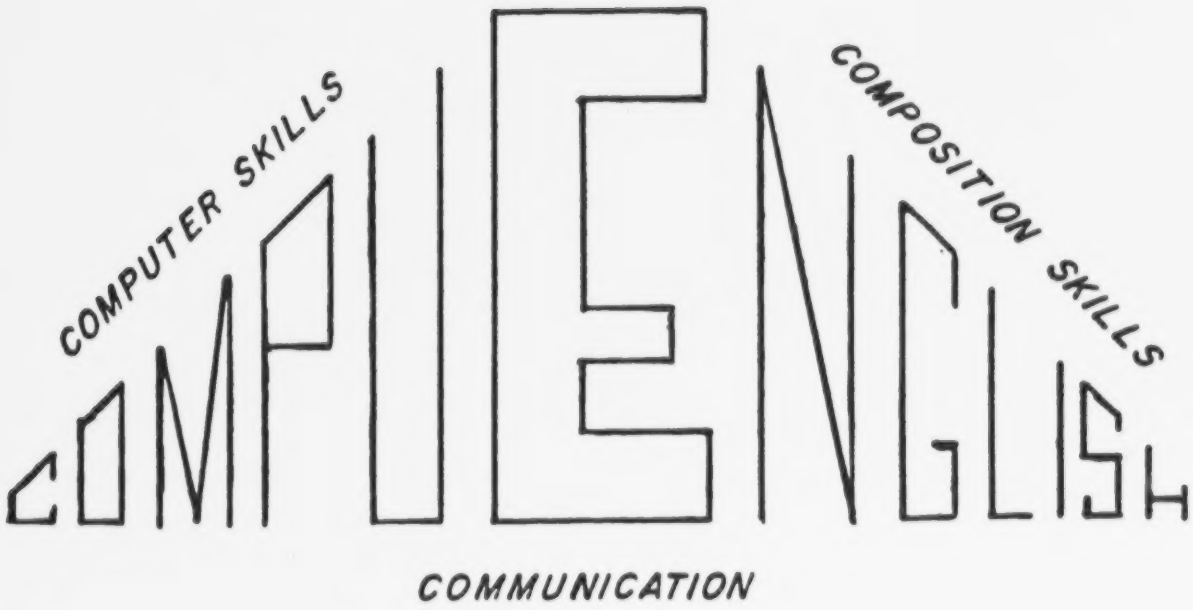
COMPUENGLISH PROJECT



Marjorie Luesebrink, Dave Everett, and L. Joyce Arntson

IRVINE VALLEY COLLEGE

PROGRESS REPORT II ON COMPUTER ENGLISH PROGRAM

Year End, 1985

by

Marjorie Luesebrink

Program Leaders: Joyce Arntson, Dave Everett
Marjorie Luesebrink

This project is college-wide in scope: the School of Arts, Languages and Humanities, Assistant Dean, Donald Rickner; the School of Business and Social Sciences, Assistant Dean, John Lowe; and the School of Health, Life Sciences, Physical Sciences and Technologies, Assistant Dean, Gary Resnick; have cooperated in the success of CompuEnglish.

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FOREWORD TO PROGRESS REPORT I

The greater part of this report consists of a description of the CompuEnglish Project, a recounting of logistics such as number and kinds of machines, training time, teaching strategies, and so forth. The Appendix, in fact, attempts merely to track the documents we generated in order to start up. I have, at this writing, refrained from drawing too many conclusions about the more subjective aspects of Computers in the Humanities. This is partly inadvertent, partly by design.

The "inadvertent" aspect occurred because our thinking changed so much during the course of our investigations. When we first began we wanted to determine whether or not computer-based composition classes would really give our students long-term benefits. However, at that time, computer-augmented composition research was in its infancy (now it's in toddlerhood)--not enough research had been published, not enough concrete information was available to make a reliable evaluation. We decided we'd need to try such a program and find out for ourselves. Surprisingly, the problem very quickly became not whether we could do it well, but whether it could be done at all.

Each school we studied had approached computer usage in different fashion--different resources, different hardware, different software, and, most importantly, different teaching assumptions. At the time, few of them had figures on training time or student adoption/retention. None of the existing programs approximated the conditions at our campus. Some colleges, Drexel, Harvard, and Brown, for example, were arranging for each student to possess a computer (at least nine institutions now require incoming students to buy a computer). However, many of these schools intend students to use computing skills for specific purposes, business, say, or engineering. They were not recording student adoption of word processing skills or essay preparation. Other researchers were conducting trial experiments with word processing with special populations. Collette Daiute of Harvard University was getting positive results with new users, and Carol McAllister of Southwestern had started up a lab for remedial learners that included word processing. In both cases, though, the computer facilities were dedicated to composition, not shared with other disciplines. UCLA was completing the development of WANDAH (it will be marketed in the fall of 1985 by Harcourt Brace as the HBJ Writer). Here, again, we could find promise but not a viable model. UCLA was equipped with a multi-station writing lab proctored by teaching assistants; moreover, the WANDAH program was more than a word processor, it was a complete teaching aid--including pre-writing tasks, outlining functions, and post-writing editorial aids. Even if we could have purchased it, the specialized nature of the program was unsuitable for us. Finally, we investigated the successful Writer's Workbench published by Bell Laboratories and used at Colorado State. The results from this program were encouraging--but it required mainframe support. Within a matter of weeks, then, we stopped trying to determine the "greater truth" about computers and students and set about to solve the quite real issues that faced us in just trying to set up a project.

That effort consumed the fall semester. While the "solutions" we discovered are particular to our college, we hope they can provide guidance to other schools with "shared" labs and limited computer stations who wish to investigate computer-augmented composition programs. That, of course, brings us to the question of "Why?"

During the past year our thinking, and the opinions of other educators, has continued to evolve rapidly. What seemed a hypothetical hunch a year ago is being confirmed across the country. Computer usage is not valuable to an English student (or a student writing for any other discipline, for that matter) simply because it's a "new" skill--word processing actually encourages students to write better.

Our goal for the Spring semester was to demonstrate as exactly as possible how students wrote better and if possible, how much better. We already know that certain mechancial elements of their writing would improve quickly. But we wanted to address more fundamental aspects of thinking and writing--organization, logic, coherence, creativity. This involved "inventing" a system--holistic grading sessions (eliminating teacher bias), experimental in-class writing (do students retain improved writing skills away from the computer?), and standardized testing instruments (do computer students fare better than others?). Currently, we have collected quantities of data and await the end of the semester to complete the experiment and evaluate the results.

These efforts coincide with similar ones elsewhere. At the recent Conference on Computers and Writing at UCLA, several presenters reported on the preliminary findings from composition-based word processing studies. At the University of Washington, Anne R. Gere is completing a field test of WANDAH. Her paper concentrated on the difficulties of designing experiments to test improvement in overall writing quality. The Washington project, like the one at Saddleback North, involves computer and non-computer classes, holistic grading, and standardized instruments.

Another project, directed by John C. Thomas of the New York Institute of Technology, consists of a five-unit reading and writing course supported by word processing and computer-aided instruction. It can provide valuable direction as we integrate remedial populations into our program in the Fall. The preliminary findings of these researchers, though, substantiate our experiences.

In fact, an impressive consensus is emerging among educators. Students do improve their writing through the use of word processing--and they do it by fairly consistent behaviors that occur regardless of specific environment.

- The first step in the process is an increase in self-esteem. In contrast to English "language processing" which often involves weeks (or years) of frustration before a student feels a sense of accomplishment, word processing allows a students to be functional in a valuable, related skill fairly quickly. By finding an unexpected reward in a writing-related activity, the student begins to think more about the writing itself. (Sometimes that's half the battle.)

- The second step in the process was not anticipated by the researchers--but it has powerful implications. Students learn to write better through networking and group help. The initial contact between the students is almost always mechanical--how to set a margin, how to double space. That kind of interchange quickly escalates to actual talk about the writing--does this look like a good topic sentence? How does this sound? Moreover, while the collaboration benefits occur more quickly in a lab setting, they seem to develop in dorms and neighborhoods as well. Anne Gere, observing this phenomenon, questioned her students and found that the aspect they disliked most about writing was its "loneliness." Having a context to talk about their writing made it easier to write.

- A third, early step in the process may not be pedagogically important, but it's practically sound. As students begin to turn out attractive-looking, mechanically improved papers, they gain confidence and are willing to invest more of their self-worth into the final product.

- From these preliminary students reactions, researchers then find, developing all at once, a number of other intrinsically more important behaviors--the ones we are really hoping for in every composition student.

Students write longer, more imaginative papers. Since the computer comes to be seen as a neutral "pal," they relax and play a little more. If the student writes something silly or awkward, he/she can erase it quickly. The students come to view the text as flexible all the way up to Print. And, even then, changes can be made without retyping the entire paper.

Students display a willingness to rewrite. Because with the a word processor the revision takes place on the screen, immediately, students are able to obtain the direct, instantaneous, and positive feedback that is the basis of all good learning. Even with an aid such as a spelling check, the electronic process approximates an ideal learning situation. Instead of receiving a marked paper back three weeks after misspelling a word, the student can flag the word immediately, select an alternative version that the computer will accept, and internalize the correct spelling right away. Studies show that the best writers revise as they go along, adjusting punctuation, changing words. In that way, they are able to devote "revision" activities to considerations of content, structure. By learning to revise--both in the lab as the paper is being composed, and by going back to the disk after the instructor has provided feedback--students using word processors strengthen their understanding of writing as a process.

Finally, the students develop control of their writing. By assuming more writing-related activities once reserved for the teacher/classroom environment--brainstorming, collaboration, editing, and so forth, the students consider themselves more "responsible" for the finished product. And that is the way we want to send them into the world.

All of these patterns are just beginning to emerge from the work going on in computer-English projects. By design, then, I kept speculation about the scientific aspects to a minimum in this report. Its mission is to describe founding procedures and experimental strategies, and subsequent investigation will have to wait for the next document. New reports and new products are appearing every day. Random House will have 19 software packages on the market this fall for college students--everything from Monopoly "what if" challenges for economics students to simulated "real life" problem-solving for Spanish students. The sequel to this report will include final results of the composition experiments and analyses of the impact of computer technology in the Humanities.

Marjorie C. Luesebrink

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SECTION I

CAPSULE REPORT TO DATE

IRVINE VALLEY COLLEGE

CompuEnglish

Progress Report II

Year End, 1985

by Marjorie Luesebrink

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Joyce Arntson

It's early afternoon in the Computer Lab at Irvine Valley College--and every computer is in use. Here and there students are talking quietly about their work or sharing tips on machine operation. A quick look at the contents of the screens, however, suggests that something unusual is going on. Many of the screens are not flanked with programming commands, they are full of text. And the students aren't conferring about programming, they are helping each other with English papers. The once-forbidding Computer Lab has become a friendly place where students can use technology to write better. "I've never liked English before," one student admitted, "now it's my favorite subject."

The foregoing is typical of the Irvine Valley College CompuEnglish Program. Established in 1984, the CompuEnglish Program has gone from an experimental seed project, inquiring about the possibility of using computers in composition classes, to a successful new program that is in the process of being implemented

throughout the English sequence. CompuEnglish utilizes relevant recent technology to improve learning in languages, arts, humanities, and social sciences. So far, over 300 students have benefitted--learning word processing and writing analysis via the computer as an integral part of building composition skills. Instructors, too, have expanded their teaching potential--over forty-five full- and part-time instructors at Irvine Valley College are currently involved with the project; integrating computers into instruction, evaluating software, or providing program support. Finally, the program has continued to involve the efforts of instructors and administrators from all three schools, the School of Arts, Languages and Humanities, the School of Business and Social Sciences, and the School of Health, Life, and Physical Sciences and Technologies. This report summarizes and updates the activities of the CompuEnglish Project since Spring, 1985. (For reports from 1984, see Report No. 1.) As I look back on that spring report, I am again reminded of how fast the integration of computers into writi
&ng has proceeded, and how our
thinking on the subject has continued to evolve.

The CompuEnglish Program So Far

Only a year ago, our fledgling efforts were centered around two classes, a freshman composition, English 1A, and a Business Communications class. Our goal was to team teach these classes, offering a word processing component as part of the regular curriculum. Each CompuEnglish student received five hours of training on IBM PC computers in Volkswriter (word processing), Random House Proofreader (spelling check), and Grammatik (grammar analysis program). We questioned whether the students would like it, if they could learn word processing, if their writing would improve--in short, if it would work at all. To

our surprise, not only was the program popular with students, but instructors found students wrote better papers overall--and for reasons we hadn't even suspected.

Future Plans

Now, our plans for the future include a three-part, comprehensive program to provide computer support for students at all levels and in many disciplines. First, we anticipate offering an appropriate word processing skills package to students at each level of our English sequence, from English As a Second Language through remedial sentence and paragraph classes, freshman composition and advanced composition. Second, we hope to integrate effective computer-aided instruction software into each level--spelling vocabulary practice for E.S.L., for example, and programs such as HBJ's Carat Patch for English 300- and 200-level students. Also, for instructors in foreign languages, social sciences, history, and music we are providing training, product information, and program support for computer-augmented learning. Third, we have moved ahead to give every student on the Irvine Valley College campus modern technology for information data retrieval. The Library has purchased an IBM PC that will be used to give students access to nationwide data services through Search Helper and Knowledge Index. Further efforts will expand modem operations to labs across the campus. We envision a complete program in the future that will provide students with computer support in learning activities, information gathering and storage, and text creation and preparation. And, judging from the results of our research, we are convinced that such a program is of vital importance to our students.

The Program in 1985

Briefly, our efforts since last spring have involved a few key areas: expanding the scope of the program, evaluating research results from spring and summer classes, continuing research into new products and developments in the field, and working to improve curriculum and program implementation.

Scope of the Program

Fortunately, the program has expanded naturally due to the slow but steady increase in numbers of available computers. The popularity of "computer" English with students and the high level of interest among the faculty has resulted in the administration giving high priority to the acquisition of computers. In fall, 1984, the CompuEnglish Program served two classes--a total of 45 students. During the spring semester, 1985, five English 1A classes participated in the experimental project. Although only three of those groups received computer training, by this time over 100 students on campus were regularly using computers at school or at home to prepare their papers.

During the summer, we were lucky to have unlimited use of the Computer Lab during the morning hours. That gave us an opportunity to conduct training sessions for instructors who were interested in the program. It also gave us a chance to research what was clearly "the best of all possible worlds," an English class actually being held full-time in the Computer Lab. My morning English 200 (paragraph writing) class was able to meet in the Lab and an adjoining conference-study area. That meant that students could compose and revise during class time with direct, individual, instructor supervision during

all stages of composition. The dramatic improvement in writing for students in such a learning environment suggests to me that this should be a goal of ours. Accordingly, we are currently working with the CAD/CAM program people on the possibility of sharing a "teaching" lab facility.

This fall, six English 1A classes and two English 200 classes have received word processing training as a part of their normal English curriculum. We hope to provide additional instruction for English 1A (Advanced Composition) students in Framework. This group will have access to special weekend workshops for advanced students. Finally, in our plans for spring, 1986, we will be limited only by computer availability and the amount of lead time we need for curricular planning and development.

It appears that enough computers will be available to accommodate some of the instructors who are waiting to have their students enter the CompuEnglish Program. We have nearly doubled the number of IBM PC's on campus--from 12 in 1984 to 25 at present. We are also making increased use of the 26 Apple computers (two of which are now in the Humanities Center) for computer-aided instruction in spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and reading, in addition to word processing. At present, we are very short of software support in this area--and we hope to remedy the situation next semester. Moreover, should plans to "share" computer time with the CAD/CAM program materialize, we will be able to include more students.

Along with the challenge of computer access, we have an equally serious need for expanded program planning and coordination. In addition to the need to upgrade our English 1A materials, we must investigate software and software

purchase issues, and evaluate and plan curricula for the entire language sequence. Our research shows that students throughout their English training can benefit tremendously from computer-augmented composition skills. We hope eventually to offer computer support for E.S.L., English 300 (sentence review), English 200, English 1A, and English 1B. As we complete the planning stages, each of these areas will be incorporated into CompuEnglish.

Evaluation of Research Results

During the spring semester, 1985, the CompuEnglish faculty carried out an extensive tracking program to evaluate the effectiveness of computer assistance in writing. The results were dramatic and encouraging in many ways, but they also called into question some of our basic assumptions about students and computers.

A. Improvement in Student Writing--Testing Instruments and Results

The students in all five classes were measured with a number of testing devices. First, of course, we conducted surveys and interviews. At the same time, each of the classes was given the Nelson-Denney Reading Test. This was to make sure that we were working with comparable students across the board. The mid-term was agreed upon by all teachers and was holistically graded. Already, the computer-using students' grades were 10-15 percent higher, even though the mid-terms were in-class writing and, therefore, lacking in most of the "advantages" of computer composition. Throughout the course, instructors tracked student progress. The final was also administered to all the classes and included the viewing of a

film, take-home questions, and an in-class essay. Again, the results from the computer-using group showed grades 15 percent higher. It was relatively easy to account for students writing better papers on the computer, using spelling and grammar aids, than could be produced by a comparable student using a typewriter, but we are not sure we can account for the marked improvement of computer-using students on in-class, Blue Book exams. Evaluating our recent research results, we find ourselves no longer asking the question "do students write better?," but, rather the question, "why do they write that much better?" While it is tempting to conclude that students write better with computer-augmented instruction, other factors may be at work here.

1. The interest and excitement generated by the instructors in a program of this kind gets passed on to the students. A number of studies have shown that the teacher's level of energy and interest is as important as any other factor in a student's learning process. When instructors come to view CompuEnglish as a ho-hum proposal, will students' performances fall?

2. A number of studies on computers in the classroom have mentioned the "novelty" factor. Because students view computers as new and different, they pay attention to the newness of the technology. When the novelty disappears, will the spectacular gains in writing ability also evaporate?

3. Results from the tests and students' surveys show that the students' improvement in writing is due not so much to the mechanical aids but

to student networking and to the "risk free" factor in composing on the computer. That is, most of the students did not continue to use Grammatik as a post-composition aid after the first couple of papers, but the experience of having run it a few times, plus the group feedback, made students more conscious of mechanics in subsequent writing. Students continued to run the Random House Proofreader--but they did so with a non-computer aid, the dictionary. Students learned that it was not much help to guess about the correct spelling of a word and then run through the Proofreader again, only to have the word flagged a second time. So they did what English teachers have been hoping would happen (without too much success) for a long time, they brought a dictionary to composing sessions. Most important to the students' writing improvement, we felt, was simply the fact that the computer doesn't "punish" the writer for seeing an error and making a correction. (On a typed sheet, the easiest thing for a student to do was not "see" a mistake, because that would mean typing the entire page over. With the computer, students weren't afraid to examine their work--if they should see a way to improve it, they could do it without effort. Similarly, it's easier to have a peer look at your work and make suggestions if the price of change is relatively low.)

4. In all of the regular, typed work, instructors agreed that the computer facilitated revision during the first drafts and rewriting of later versions. All of the instructors had favored rewriting in the past, feeling that for learning to really take place, the student needed to model the writing behavior correctly--otherwise the ineffective piece of writing is what is "set" in the student's head.

However, the sheer logistical problem of making every student retype papers--especially to make only few improvements--was never very workable. Using the computer, students willingly rewrote papers, in many cases up to two or three times. These frequent rewrites undoubtedly led to the dramatic improvement in writing we found with the computer-using students.

5. The "rewrite" factor, however, cannot account for the fact that the computer-using students even wrote better on <u>in class</u> essays. Some factors may be operating: the higher level in motivation arising from novelty and teacher enthusiasm may account for the difference; perhaps the extra rewriting actually improved the students' writing overall, though this cannot be proven with current methods.

B. <u>Student Satisfaction</u>

All of our preliminary research showed that students were overwhelmingly happy with the program--and the results from spring continued to reflect that attitude. Although the program was entirely voluntary, over 80 percent of the students who received word processing training continued to write their papers on the computer for the remainder of the semester. Some specific details about student adoption emerged.

1. Even though the plan was voluntary, with the exception of students with very heavy work and study loads--so heavy that they would be likely to be writing papers in the wee hours of the morning--all

other students willingly rearranged schedules so they could do their composing at the computer.

2. Initial enthusiasm or lack of it made very little difference in program participation. Students with initial objections to the program often ended up the most ardent about its advantages.

3. Other than initial mechanical difficulties, the only negative response was from students who worried that computer training was interfering with "regular" English study. (We are sympathetic to this argument; certainly English and not computer skills should be the focus of the class. Instructors have tended to feel, however, that the five hours class time given up to computer instruction is more than made up for by [a] the fact that during that time students can receive twice as much individual attention [since half the class is in the Computer Lab], and [b] the fact that students improve mechanics and proof-reading skills so quickly through computer training that less lecture time needs to be spent on those matters. In any case, it would have been nearly impossible to establish a coherent CompuEnglish Program if students had been required to sign up for an additional class at another hour of the day. We will continue to examine solutions for this problem.)

4. One aspect of student "acceptance" that we had not planned on and that diluted our test results was the "information sharing" behavior of the student in various classes. We designed the spring program to have three "computer" groups and two "control" groups. By about

halfway through the semester, nearly half of the "control" group students had picked up word processing skills from their friends in the "computer" English classes. Other schools have reported that the results of their experiments have been compromised by highly motivated students picking up computer skills on their own (especially if lab space is made available to all students).

5. We expected that, as time went on, more and more students would enter English classes having already taken a course in computers. At present, however, the ratio seems to be holding steady: approximately 1/4 of the English students have had a class or own a computer; a balancing 1/4 have never used one. Upon exiting the class, though, over 50 percent of the low-use group states that they intend to take another computer class.

6. In planning classes for the future, we are taking into account certain aspects of the teaching structure that we feel contributed significantly to a student's ability to utilize the program. In the first place, all five hours of instruction involved "hands on" time for the student. While it is quite possible for a student to get a good start on word processing skills in five hours, this time must be spent <u>at the keyboard with an instructor</u>. Secondly, we feel that the "spacing" of the class sessions--an hour a week for five weeks--gave students much-needed "absorption" time. Most students would spend several hours in the lab between sessions keyboarding their papers, but if they ran into trouble, at least they could be assured that they would see the computer instructor within the week. (There were

also lab assistants on duty to assist with mechanical problems.) And, in every case so far, the English instructors have had some training on computers--so they have acted as valuable resources for the students.

7. Finally, and most importantly, we found a repeat of the phenomena discussed in the first volume of this report, and also observed at the University of Washington--that is; students actually talking about their papers as a result of "sharing" mechanical information in the Computer Lab. What begins as a question about margins turns into a discussion of content; students can take some of the loneliness out of writing by getting informal feedback from their peers. This "anti-loneliness" theme surfaced often in interviews with students.

C. Instructor Input

Instructor participation in the CompuEnglish Program has been both voluntary and selective all along. Thus, the generally satisfactory results of the CompuEnglish students are close to what we might find any time from these instructors' classes. Participating instructors have also provided valuable feedback about what they think we should do with the program as we set about monitoring and revising in our growth toward a mature program.

1. All of the instructors felt that computer training was of great benefit for their students--not from a pragmatic or mechanical perspective, but because it allowed students to see their work as "plastic," changeable, and improvable all along.

2. The more extensive an instructor's computer background, the less outside support is needed. All of the instructors who were newly trained, however, expressed a need for more training and background. They wanted to be able to answer students' questions in class and make the computer experience as meaningful to their regular course work as possible.

3. Instructors requested an "integrated" curriculum between the word processing segment and the English segment of the course development. This is, we used the tutorial that already exists on the Volkswriter disk--it's fine for word processing exercise, but instructors pointed out that such an exercise would be far more helpful if the students were keyboarding and correcting sample introductory paragraphs in standard rhetorical modes. We plan to work on writing such a companion curriculum for English 1A this spring.

4. Instructors suggested that we provide a videotape of the five computer sessions, so students who miss class during one of the sessions will not fall behind in the sequence. We are looking into this.

5. Some instructors mentioned that, while their students' writing was more grammatically correct and flowing, the "tone" and "diction" of their writing had changed--they had moved into a more "verbal" style, more colloquial, as if they were "talking" into the computer. We hope to investigate this possibility. It does seem to collaborate the suspicions of the U.C.L.A. team that developed WANDAH (now HBJ Write)--who found that their students wrote really long papers on the

computer. For some students, writing in a more relaxed style may not be effective for academic work, for others, a more relaxed style may suggest a newly acquired ease with writing.

Program Assessment

Program Assessment is slightly complicated at this point due to the fact that each segment of our project exists at a different level of development. I am indebted to Brian Stecher, Professional Associate, Educational Testing Service, writing in the T.H.E. Journal for his chart "Educational Concerns in Computer-Based Programs." We have adopted it for use in evaluating our project. English 1A, for example, we identify a "new Program" basis: Implementing, Monitoring, and Revising.

While some of the answers we have found are of interest only to in-house faculty, some discoveries may help our colleagues across the country.

Equipment and Materials

1. We started with Volkswriter as our word processing program for one main reason--the school already owned a copy for each IBM PC in the Lab. Since, originally, most software publishers required a school to purchase a "license" for each computer in the Lab, we used what would cost the least. Further experimentation, however, suggests that the specific word processing program makes very little difference, as long as it can perform the major functions the student needs. Obviously, a program such as Bank Street Writer or Apple Pie is of assistance to a student writing a two-

paragraph paper, but Wordstar would be better for a student writing a ten-page paper. Secondly, the difficulty of the program seems to matter very little. As long as there is intense, hands-on training time and lab supervision, students do well on most standard word processor programs. Third, choice of a word processor seems to be a personal thing. Some students go from Volkswriter to another program they like better immediately (some of our students have chosen Displaywrite), and some are fond of whatever they "fixed" on first. From the instructor's point of view, the word processing program the student chooses is immaterial.

2. We chose Random House Proofreader and Grammatik because they were "free-standing," and we already had a word processor. Most new word processing programs come complete with a spelling check and some with grammar help. In our view, Grammatik was the least essential part of the process, and students used it only at the beginning of their training.

3. In any future computer purchase, one idea will be paramount in our planning: memory. Even if you can't afford 640K now, you are likely to want it in the near future. Our future plans call for training our advanced composition students with Framework or AppleWorks. The most comprehensive, fully integrated software programs need at least 512K to work for students writing long projects. If you have a chance to purchase a hard disk, do so.

4. Another reason for attempting to secure a hard disk or, even better, some kind of linked access network is the difficulty of software acquisition, storage, and management. We have put DOS, Volkswriter, and Grammatik

on one disk for each machine--which means a student needs to check out only two disks instead of four--but our attempts to expand the range of software available to English and humanities students face inevitable conflict with needs and space requirements of the math-CIS-accounting students sharing the same lab. Also, the purchase of individual copy-protected software for each machine begins to assume alarming proportions when the numbers approach two dozen or more. Many publishers are now offering special multiple-use rates for such systems.

5. A final reason to think in terms of linked access is the possibility of information retrieval. Communications equipment is expensive; few schools can afford modems for each computer--but a linked system can make efficient use of even one or two.

Cost

After the publication of Volume One of the CompuEnglish Progress Report, a number of people asked us about the cost of the project. Essentially, costs for a program such as this can be extremely visible, or they can be nearly buried in the resource investments of your institution. In our case, we utilized existing labs, equipment, computers, software (with only two exceptions), and lab assistants. The major costs were for instructor compensation to teach word processing, faculty workshops, and research expenses. Should one need to purchase computers, outfit a room, buy new software, and hire and train lab assistants, the size of the program would be the determinant. In any case, there are a number of ways to begin a program with even meager resources--training time and time-on-task are more important, we feel, than specific equipment.

New Products and Developments

The year 1985 marks a year of enormous growth for computers in education. Conferences are well-attended and educators are eager to share and learn everything possible--there's something new and exciting every week. College educators are watching closely as new software is developed for the adult learner--computer aided instruction in grammar and foreign language, simulated "what-if" learning tools for historians, psychologists, economists, and social scientists. Teachers in the arts are using computer-aided instruction to teach rhythm and harmony--and even giving students the opportunity to "program" music in Basic. The sophistication of the new graphics programs makes computer knowledge valuable to anyone in art or design fields (even interior designers are now using a "simulated, computerized" representation of a room to show clients what the room will look like with certain furnishings). In the fields of creative writing, journalism, technical writing, and academic writing the computer's worth as a tool for document preparation--and more importantly as an aid for structuring and composition--has moved out of the realm of "novelty" and into the world of "necessary skill." In the next few years there will be many computer-augmented learning programs in a wide variety of disciplines. The important thing, finally, is that these programs utilize technology efficiently and intelligently to expand a student's learning potential throughout her/his education and her/his life.

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SECTION II

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